

– REMARKS OF MAYOR PAUL D. FRAIM –
MACARTHUR MEMORIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY
FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2014
11:00 AM

Thank you, Mr. Kolakowski, and good morning to our guests from Hampton Roads and around the world. I'm pleased to be here to mark the 50th Anniversary of Norfolk's iconic MacArthur Memorial.

Fifty years ago right now, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur was laid to rest in the Memorial behind me, after a funeral service at St. Paul's Church. The General had lain in state here for two days, and 20,000 citizens, from as near as Norfolk and as far as Asia, came to pay their respects. The MacArthur funeral ranks as one of the greatest events in the history of Norfolk.

There's no doubt that General MacArthur was one of the giants of the 20th century. His larger than life story is certainly familiar to everyone here.

A brilliant military career that spanned two centuries and included three major wars . . . his link to Norfolk through his mother, Mary Pinkney Hardy . . . and his decision late in life to donate his memorabilia and papers to the City of Norfolk.

General MacArthur made important contributions to our country and the world during his long and extraordinary career in the United States Army, and this Memorial stands as a testament to his enduring popularity and to the hold he still exerts on our imaginations.

The fact we have so many countries today represented here demonstrates the General's impact beyond the United States.

As Ed Snyder said, this Memorial was the product of several organizations working together. It is a true Norfolk and Hampton Roads success. The vision, dedication, and support of my predecessors Fred Duckworth and Roy Martin were instrumental in establishing the Memorial.

E.T. Gresham Construction transformed the Old City Hall into the fitting Memorial and museum that we have today – an enduring tribute to an American legend. Here, where the story of General MacArthur's remarkable life is portrayed, there are lessons to be learned that are every bit as relevant and as important today as they were during the General's time.

Visitors learn about the value of patriotism, and in so doing gain a renewed appreciation for how blessed we are to live in a free nation.

They learn about personal sacrifices that are necessary when that freedom is threatened, and they learn about duty . . . the duty incumbent on all citizens to serve their country.

And, of course, they learn about war, about why it is sometimes necessary in order to defend our liberty and way of life . . . about its horror . . . and about its ultimate futility.

General MacArthur put it this way: “I have known war as few men now living know it. It’s very destructiveness on both friend and foe has rendered it useless as a means for settling international disputes.”

The MacArthur Memorial began as a tourist destination in 1964, and has evolved to become an internationally acclaimed museum and historical research center. The most visible part of that evolution has been MacArthur Square itself.

Originally the Memorial was just the old City Hall building and an exterior annex dating back to the 1930s. In the 1960s an Archives and Administration building was built and Walter Hancock’s statue of General MacArthur -right in front of us- was added to the square in 1970.

In the 1980s the Archives building and the theater were expanded, followed by a complete renovation of the Memorial building in the 1990s.

Finally, in 2012, MacArthur Square took on the look it has now when the Visitors Center was completed with a high definition theater, gift shop, and changing exhibit space.

Like other successful civic projects before it, the MacArthur Memorial is a product of the longstanding partnership between the City and the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation.

Today, as we mark this occasion of the MacArthur Memorial’s 50th Anniversary, I reaffirm the city’s commitment to that partnership, and commitment to sustain and operate the Memorial as one of the premier national and international attractions in Norfolk and Hampton Roads.

In closing, I encourage everyone to be a part of this dynamic institution. Experience its exhibits, archives, and educational programs, and help make the next 50 years as great as the last. The MacArthur Memorial has a bright future, and I look forward to the second half-century in the life of this Norfolk treasure. Thank you.